



# **WOMEN**

**Lutheran World Federation**

**October 1974**

**Newsletter No. 1**

## Dear Sisters,

Did you know that two and a half years ago the Women's Desk of the Lutheran World Federation started its work? Although there had been a Women's Department within the LWF from 1948 - 1952, it was decided at the General Assembly in Hannover to integrate women completely into the other existing structures. Whereas at that time this step seemed to be an appropriate one, in practice it proved to have been premature. Instead of producing the desired integration, it resulted in the complete disappearance of women from the executive staff of the LWF. Thus women's work as such became one of the most neglected areas in the life and work of the Lutheran churches, especially on the international level. This situation, however, is gradually changing. This first newsletter of the LWF Women's Desk is intended to make you aware of the new era.

It is also an invitation to all of you to share with us your ideas on what should or could be done in the area of women's work on the local, national and international level.

We in Geneva started out by visiting member churches to listen to women in various countries tell of their problems and needs. During this period, it has become increasingly clear that women's work within the churches needs redefinition and thorough renewal. In most parts of the world it still consists of handicrafts, preparation of food or coffee for church gatherings, the collection of money for the church and some Bible study. While these activities have their own value, more and more women are coming to realise that they have the potential to render a much more differentiated service to their churches and societies. Women as well as church leaders are beginning to recognise that by continuing the traditional type of women's work the churches are losing the educated and/or young women, especially in urban areas. But what is more important: women all over the world are in the process of gaining a new consciousness, which makes them realise that they live in a world where their church and their society need their talents and services.

The period of transition from the traditional type of services to broader involvement and new responsibilities is not easy. Most of the women's groups or organi-



sations find themselves saying "yes" to larger involvement without having defined exactly what their aim is to be.

One of the most obvious obstacles to finding satisfactory solutions is the lack of adequate leadership among women on all levels. This lack is strongly felt in the local situations but also at national, regional and international conferences, which are in most cases entirely or at least predominantly male.

Therefore we regard the development of adequate female leadership as the number one task of the LWF Women's Desk. In 1973, we helped organise two leadership training seminars, one in Madagascar and one in Ethiopia. The latter is documented in the publication "Leadership Development for Women", Addis Ababa 1973.

"Leadership Development for Women", Addis Ababa 1973, is still available upon request, especially for leaders of women's work and other multipliers.

Further leadership training seminars are being planned for the coming years. These are also seen as part of our contribution to International Women's Year ("International Women's Year 1975" by Eva von Hertzberg, see page 4).

Another means available for the development of qualified lead-

ers is the International Scholarship and Exchange Programme of the LWF Department of Studies ("Scholarships" by Christa Evans, see page 9).

Furthermore, the Women's Desk of the LWF sees as one of its responsibilities the informing of women about important events within the Lutheran Churches, especially those which are of an international nature. For women's work properly understood means involvement in the life and work of the churches on all levels. Women should not care only about their own problems but also about all other concerns of the church. It is imperative that women's work prepare women for active and creative participation in all aspects of the life of the church, including the decision-making processes. The failure to do so has a negative effect not only on women but also on the churches themselves.

In order to facilitate a better exchange about important events, creative persons and helpful ideas, let me ask you to share with us any-

thing that is coming up in your church before the end of 1975, including elections of new leaders, reorganisation, conferences, assemblies, etc. We would also appreciate your letting us know about the problems you are facing in your work and your needs and hopes and ideas regarding the involvement of women in the life and work of the churches. If you

have a letter, a poem or a short article written by and about women, send it to us; your sisters in various churches will be happy to read it in our newsletter.

We are looking forward to hearing from many of you as soon as possible.

May the love, the peace and the  
joy of the Lord be with you all,

Yours,

Eva Zabolai-Csekme

In order to contact Lutheran women in Asia, the Rev. Eva Zabolai-Csekme will be traveling through Hong Kong, Taiwan, Manila, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and India, 27th October - 19th December 1974. If you are interested in meeting her in any of these countries, please contact the head of your church.

"It is necessary for all women to have a spirit of courage in our world today. Virtually every country has its heart disturbed by conflict and it is only through faith and courage that we women can obtain strength. Who knows, perhaps this very time is bringing us closer to the Kingdom of God. In all this growing we need each other and we need to respond to the living Christ."

Women's Group in Ghana  
WCC Conference, Berlin 1974



# **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR 1975**

On 18th December 1972 the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed International Women's Year 1975. Though for years many efforts have been made to promote equality of women and their integration into the political and social life of their countries much has still to be done in this field. It is the purpose of International Women's Year to emphasise all the UN declarations and conventions concerning women, and again to draw attention to the urgency of implementing them.

The intensified action of International Women's Year should help especially

- to promote equality between men and women;
- to ensure the full integration of women in the total development effort, especially by emphasizing women's responsibility and important role in economic, social and cultural development at the national, regional and international levels, particularly during the Second United Nations Development Decade;
- to recognize the importance of women's increasing contribution to the development of friendly relations and cooperation among States and to the strengthening of world peace.

(General Assembly resolution 3010/XXVII/)

The Working Group appointed by the UN Commission on the Status of Women has prepared a draft programme of national, regional and international action to be realised during the year.

The central theme is:

▷ Equality - Development - and Peace ◁

"The year is a time to review and evaluate progress made in these three areas since the United Nations Charter established the basic goals in 1945. It is even more a time to stimulate new initiatives and develop or set in motion dynamic national, regional and international action programmes.

"Widespread publicity and promotional efforts are needed, along with substantive activities designed to have a continuing impact in the years ahead, as part of a sustained long-term effort of the international community to improve the condition of women and their contribution to society.

"The year should demonstrate the value of a unified approach to issues of human rights, development and peace which cannot be successfully dealt with as isolated questions distinct from each other. It should be viewed as an event in which both men and women will participate...."

(from the Report of the Working Group to the Commission on the Status of Women)

Examples of specific objectives are:

E Q U A L I T Y

- ....achieving full equality before the law, where it does not yet exist....
- ....achieving equal educational opportunities on all levels....
- ....promoting equality of economic rights: the right to work and the right to work of equal value, non-discrimination in employment....
- ....supporting equality of rights and responsibilities in the family....
- ....working toward full participation of women and men as equal partners in policy formulation and decision-making at the local, national and international levels....
- ....meeting the health needs of girls and women equally with those of boys and men....

## D E V E L O P M E N T

- ....improving living and working conditions....
- ....expanding freedom of choice for all persons in planning life patterns....
- ....improving the quality of life for rural women....
- ....eliminating illiteracy....
- ....providing training for women, including civic participation, leadership, responsible consumerism, science and technology....
- ....improving social services: protection of maternity, health of mother and child, family planning, child care....
- ....seeking to improve the situation of women in prisons and other places of detention....
- ....combating racism and racial discrimination....
- ....supporting women and children in the struggle for independence and self-determination....

## P E A C E

- ....improving international co-operation through effective information and education of women in the so-called developed countries about the living conditions and problems of women in the so-called developing countries....
- ....promoting the peace efforts of women's groups, national and international organisations....
- ....encouraging all women of the world to promote détente, international peace and cooperation among States through: combating colonialism and neo-colonialism, realising the principle of the right of people to self-determination, dissemination of information concerning the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law....
- ....promoting the free flow of information and ideas among countries on the contribution to peace....
- ....promoting exchange of visits by women of different countries to study common problems, thereby promoting friendly relations among States.



## WHAT CAN BE DONE ?

The Working Group proposes a variety of actions and programmes, inviting all interested governmental and non-governmental organisations, groups, women and men to contribute their ideas and creativity to this year.

On the national level by governments, among other things, inaugural statements might be launched, machinery and a procedure for research and evaluation established and a national commission on the Status of Women appointed. Governments should also introduce short and long-term programmes and grant financial support.

Special counselling offices could be established to advise women of their rights and obligations and to make legal aid available when infringements of these rights make it necessary.

Out of the large catalogue of activities given under Publicity and Educational Measures only a few are listed below:

- pamphlets, posters, advertisements
- commemorative postage stamps and cancellations
- publications of all kinds
- spot statements on radio and television
- exhibitions featuring artistic and cultural works by women
- distribution of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in national and local languages
- informative material (including audio-visual material) for schools on all levels, for employers, employees and all kinds of groups
- educational programmes to inform women of their legal rights and of the means available for securing their enforcement
- seminars and workshops to prepare women for participation in politics
- executive leadership and management training opportunities for women

Studies and surveys on all aspects of the status of women are needed for the preparation and support of short and long-term programmes.



## WHAT CAN WE DO ?

The success of International Women's Year 1975 cannot be measured only by what will be done on the international and national level in the way of large-scale programmes. One of its main objectives must be to reach the majority of women who have not yet been involved. Therefore action at the local and regional level is extremely important. Here we see a challenge to local churches and regional church bodies to take an active part in International Women's Year. Joint action or cooperation with other church or non-church groups may help to intensify such efforts.

Possible activities are for instance: ..information weeks...lecture series...workshops and working groups...articles in local newspaper... joint social action to help solve local problems...conferences and meetings...

▷ Have you had a try at finding out with your women's group what your special problems or needs are in your local situation? Only when we have clearly identified our needs can we take appropriate steps to meet them.

The type and content of activities will differ from country to country since they have to answer the needs in the various local situations. However, it is important to exchange plans and methods of working to share your ideas with one another.

▷ Therefore WE ASK YOU to write us about YOUR PLANS - complete or incomplete - and possibly to send us some material.

The Department of Studies/Women's Desk is contributing to International Women's Year through intensified action on leadership training for women. Since in our churches there is a great need for active participation by women, we want to concentrate our efforts on this special field. Right now the planning of regional consultations and seminars for 1975 is one of our main tasks.

Eva von Hertzberg

The major part of the No. 1, 1975 issue of Lutheran World will be devoted to women's concerns as a contribution to International Women's Year 1975.

# SCHOLARSHIPS

The LWF Scholarship Office has been in existence for nearly 20 years with the basic aim of providing scholarships which will help to equip people to meet a variety of needs. In January 1973 a major consultation on scholarship strategy took place in Beirut, at which the general aims were reformulated as follows:

"The International Scholarship and Personnel Exchange Program of the Lutheran World Federation is intended to strengthen the life and witness of the churches by offering church groups, institutions and members opportunities for education, training and study, in order to:

- equip them to perform their tasks in church and society more effectively;
- open avenues to relate the insights of Christian faith to various fields of learning;
- enable them to respond within their own particular situations; and
- stimulate a global awareness among the churches for their ecumenical tasks."

Among the resolutions that came out of this consultation are two which are of special interest to us women:

## "Men and Women, Lay and Ordained"

In all programs, strong emphasis will be placed on applications from women and lay persons. The goal should be: a. a balance between women and men; b. more lay participants than ordained. Further, in granting scholarships and equitable distribution on the basis of geographical regions and age should be sought."

The second resolution provides the possibility for married applicants whose programmes extend beyond six months to apply to take their husbands/wives and children with them.

"When a husband or wife does accompany or join the scholarship recipient, every effort will be made to provide him/her with special courses, learning experiences or opportunities for service."



In underlining these resolutions, the Commission on Studies in its last meeting in Geneva in April 1974 expressed its "definite wish that the proportional distribution of the scholarship money to women be not less than 30% and preferably as high as 60%."

#### What you ought to know

You can apply for long-range or short-term (1 - 12 months) scholarships. These can be either academic or practice-oriented, depending on your ultimate goals and previous experience.

Academic scholarships, as the name suggests, are given for advanced studies. The applicants' qualifications, therefore, have to come up to academic requirements.

Practice-oriented scholarships are given for various types of work for which an academic background is not necessarily required. These include all aspects of communication, youth work, women's work, Christian education, social work, etc. Some experience in the field of the requested study is desirable.

Our Scholarship Office views the applications in the context of the place from which they come and tries to meet the needs of that particular local situation.

#### How to go about applying

Application forms are normally available from the LWF National Committee or the head office of your church. This, however, varies from church to church and you should make your own inquiries. After you have filled in the forms you must send them to the appropriate body of your church to be endorsed and forwarded to the Scholarship Office in Geneva.

The application forms have to reach Geneva by 1st November of each year. However, the committee responsible for the pre-selection in your church has its own deadline which is usually 1st October but can vary from place to place..

**LWF**

**hopes**

**for more**

**applications**

**from women**

When you apply for a scholarship, it is important to state the purpose and aim of your study as clearly as possible. Remember, a vague or unclear application is more likely to be turned down by the Governing Committee, which is the decision-making body of the Scholarship Office, than an application providing all the necessary details.

Should you desire to study in another country without having a working knowledge of its language, language courses are usually provided. However, with regard to English a working knowledge is required.

Until recently most scholarship recipients were sent to the USA, Germany or Sweden, but now more and more emphasis is being put on in-country education. While the International Scholarship and Personnel Exchange Program is under the responsibility of the Department of Studies of the LWF, the in-country scholarships are provided by the Department of Church Cooperation. They are valid only for Africa, Asia and Latin America. Since the procedures in this case are somewhat different from those of the International Scholarship and Personnel Exchange Program, please get details from your respective church headquarters.

Although this scholarship programme has always been open to women, very few have taken advantage of its opportunities. This is because, among other things, women very often do not even know about the availability of such scholarships. In order to improve the situation, we ask that you do everything in your power to encourage women to make use of this opportunity when preparing for more qualified service in their church and society.

Further information is available through your home church and LWF National Committee or through the LWF Scholarship and Personnel Exchange Office, the Rev. Otto Immonen and Ms. Margret Stasius, The Lutheran World Federation, Department of Studies, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

Christa Evans



LWF Department of Studies Conferences 1974/75

Ecclesiology Consultation:

The Identity of the Church and its Service to the whole Human Being

Addis Ababa/Ethiopia

13th - 19th October 1974

Information available: Rev. Ulrich Duchrow

Conference on Church and Power

Bad Boll/Federal Republic of Germany

18th - 21st November 1974

Information available: Mr. Gerd Decke

Consultation on The Church and The Jewish People

Oslo/Norway

24th - 30th August 1975

Information available: Rev. Arne Sovik

International Consultation on Theological Education

Place of meeting still to be determined

End of summer 1975

Information available: Rev. Gyula Nagy

European Consultation on Local Church Structures:

Renewal of the Church - Problems and Possibilities of Changing  
Structures within the Community

Lieselund/Denmark

13th - 20th September 1975

Information available: Rev. Eva Zabolai-Csekme

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